SEPTEMBER, 1908 MOORE PRICE, 20 CENTS

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# Masters in Art

## A Series of Illustrated Monographs

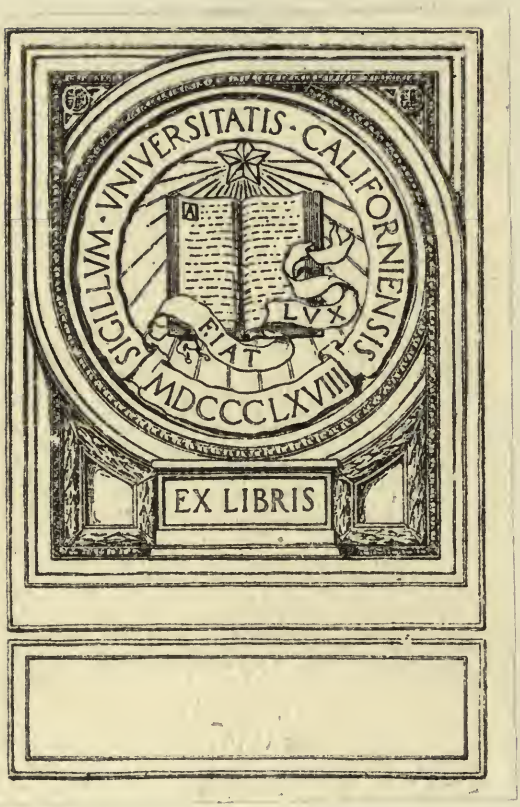
UC-NRLF
$B 360 639

Issued Monthly

MOORE

PART 105 —— VOLUME 9

Bates and Guild Company
Publishers
42 Chauncy Street
Boston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MASTERS IN ART

# Moore

ENGLISH SCHOOL

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MASTERS IN ART PLATE I
PHOTOGRAPH BY H. DIXON & SON
[341]

MOORE
SUMMER NIGHT
LIVERPOOL CORPORATION

MOORE
BLOSSOMS
OWNED BY H. TATE

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MASTERS IN ART PLATE III
PHOTOGRAPH BY HOLLYER
[345]

MOORE
SEA-GULLS SHELLS
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MASTERS IN ART PLATE IV

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MOORE
YELLOW MARGUERITES

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MOORE
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MOORE
A GARDEN

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CALIFORNIA

ALBERT MOORE
FROM A PORTRAIT

# Albert Moore

BORN 1841: DIED 1893
ENGLISH SCHOOL

ALBERT JOSEPH MOORE was the son of William Moore by his second wife, Sarah Collingham. He was born in September, 1841. His father was an artist of very considerable ability, rather well known in the north of England as a portrait-painter. His mother, too, came of a family of artists. Indeed, they were all artists in this happy family; for his brothers Henry Moore and John Collingham Moore were both painters of more than ordinary ability. Henry Moore, in fact, was the best marine painter of his day in England.

Albert Moore was a very precocious infant in the matter of art. It is recorded that he could draw before he could read or write. At all events, he began to draw very early, and there is extant a crayon drawing by him, a portrait of his father, which would not discredit a much older artist. Moore's father and brothers were of great assistance to him in his early work, though it is said that even at that time he was very independent in his judgment and never followed advice unless it appealed to his reason.

His father died when he was thirteen, and his mother moved to London. Albert, although obliged to go to school like other children of his age, still managed to keep up his art work — so much so that when he was sixteen he painted and exhibited a water-color. This was at the Royal Academy.

About this time he entered the Royal Academy, but from his own account it may be guessed that he remained there only a few months. He said that he felt the red tape of the place bound him down and that he could not develop in such surroundings. After leaving this place he and some of his friends formed a club something like the famous Langham, where they might paint from the model and incidentally correct each other's work. Some of the members of this club were Frederick Walker, W. M. Richmond, Marcus Stone, and Henry Holliday.

At this time he made the acquaintance of an architect, W. Eden Nesfield, who is said to have been a man of more than ordinary ability, although, like many men of his type, he hardly met with the success he deserved. Nesfield undoubtedly had a great influence on Moore's career, for it was he who secured the young artist various commissions for decoration, and doubtless,

too, he imposed on his friend some of his architectural views as to the place and scope of good decoration. At this time, too, Moore, besides covering wall-space, made designs for wall-paper, tiles, stained glass, etc. It is evident that all this decorative work must have had a very considerable effect on the young man's art. Just how much, it is hard to say. But it is notable that up to a certain period his work was a good deal like the work of most ambitious young artists. Suddenly he made a complete *volte face* and began producing works very different from what he had done before; and the change was almost immediate. He seemed to spring at once into his new style. For instance, 'Pomegranates' (Plate VI), which is almost the first of his works in this style, is also the most delightful. He kept up this delicate Greek style of work from 1860, when 'Pomegranates' was painted, till 1883, when the first symptoms were observed of the disease which finally ended his life.

There is not much to tell of Moore's life that is not connected with his work. He worked with untiring persistency, often, it is said, spending months in merely perfecting the drapery in one of his pictures. After recovering from a first operation necessitated by his disease, he threw himself into work again and was able to produce some fine things. After a few years, however, another operation became necessary, and, while he partially recovered from this as well, his health was undermined and his latest work is hardly so good as that produced in his prime. The disease had made such inroads into his system that nothing further could be done for him, and he died, finally, in the fifty-third year of his age, on September 25, 1893.

It has been said that Nesfield taught him what architects want in decorative work. And Moore's work always showed something of this knowledge, even though most of it was what is commonly called easel-painting. He did, however, also do a great deal of decorative work. This study and grip of design told in his later work, for whenever he wanted a pattern on a chest or chair or wall he could make a design for it of just the shape and character he desired. The architectural trend which Nesfield had given him shows in the design of his pictures. He was fond of arranging the *mise en scene* of his pictures in the merest vertical and horizontal lines; that is, they seldom suggested any entrance into the canvas. The picture often represented a flat wall handsomely adorned with lovely figures set over against it; but there was seldom the effort to "carry the eye into the picture," of which one hears so much from teachers of composition. If he made a handsome design and filled his spaces fittingly he had attained his aim, and what was happening behind the figures did not interest him.

At first there might seem no stranger thing than to find a Grecian like Moore in a country of fog and rain like England. But the curious thing is that the English have always rather fancied themselves as Grecians. Probably no nation on earth is more different in essentials from the Greeks than the English, yet there are certain superficial resemblances. One sees insolent young athletes who remind one of the Hermes of Praxiteles, and while Queen Victoria could hardly be said to look like the Venus de Milo, the Venus has a certain absurd resemblance to the good queen in her youth. Be all this as it may, Albert

Moore was certainly obsessed by Greek art. He had studied the Elgin marbles till their essence had become part of his intellect, and he composed in the same sense as the sculptor of a beautiful Greek bas-relief.

Whether he was influenced by Leighton or Leighton was influenced by him does not appear. Suffice it that both had the same passion for Greek art, though Moore, one would say, had grasped its essentials more thoroughly than Leighton. He drew just in the sense of the bas-reliefs of the Frieze of the Parthenon; that is, his drawings look like Greek bas-reliefs. They have their beautiful proportions and, too, something of their simplicity, not to say occasional bluntness. Moore never achieved, it is a question whether he tried for, the *finesse* of work like Bouguereau's or Tadema's. His paintings always have a grandiose quality. It is not in felicities of execution that he excels, but in composition or arrangement.

Many people think of Moore as a sort of under-study for Sir Frederick Leighton, or even for Alma-Tadema. But to comprehend him one should understand how different was his aim from that of these other men. Sir Frederick, knowing himself a Classicist, conceived the Greeks to be the noblest subjects to paint. Alma-Tadema was, perhaps, primarily interested in reconstituting the life of Greece and of Rome. Moore, it might be said, was not particularly interested in the Greeks as Greeks any more than he was in the Japanese as a nation. But he took his goods where he found them, and whatever was beautiful appealed to him, and he was quite simple-minded about jumbling beautiful things together without worrying about style. For instance, in his 'Yellow Marguerites' (Plate VIII) a Greek chiton and a Japanese fan appear together, and surely yellow marguerites were not the flowers of ancient Greece.

Perhaps this naïveté (if it were not the last word of sophistication) is even more marked in our painter's 'Quartet.' Here handsome youths and men clad in Greek draperies are gravely playing on Renaissance violins and 'cellos in serene unconsciousness that fiddles were not invented in their time.

Moore has been severely criticised for this peculiarity, but it is really one of the integral qualities of his art. It would have been ridiculous in the work of Alma-Tadema, for instance, where consistency is a main quality; but with Moore beauty was everything. If the Greeks did not have *viols d'amor* he gravely pitied them, and composed a picture in a happier land than theirs, where men might wear a perfect costume and enjoy a perfect instrument at the same time. It was this quality that made him particularly significant in England, for Englishmen cannot, as a race, be fairly accused of having set beauty before everything. With Moore, however, it did come before everything. His only reason for making a picture was to have it as beautiful as possible. He was singularly free from that desire to tell a story, which is so characteristic of most English artists. What he wanted to do was to make his particular square of canvas as lovely as it might be made. That it told no particular story beyond the Joy of Living and the Righteousness of Beauty did not concern him at all. He thought

> "If eyes were ever made for seeing,
> Then Beauty is its own excuse for being."

It was this side of him, no doubt, that attracted Whistler to him and accounts for his influence on Whistler's work; for it cannot be denied that he did have a great influence on Whistler, while there is no sign that Whistler had the least effect upon Moore. There are in existence certain paintings by Whistler which look more like bad Moores than like Whistlers. But Whistler, with that prescience which was one of his qualities, soon perceived that the Moore subject was not for him, and desisted. He was always, however, generous in his praise of Moore's work, and praise was not too common with him.

Moore, on his side, admired Whistler's work and manfully bore testimony to his beliefs in the famous Whistler-Ruskin trial. Both men were in certain respects ostracized and must have found a certain comfort in each other's company and conversation, though it is to be supposed that Moore's grave English serenity must have ill assorted with the cackling, crackling wit of the American.

Moore had a very definite system of composition, and when one has grasped this it is not difficult to analyze the main lines of his pictures. He always based his arrangement on certain horizontal lines; for instance, the lines of the bench and shelf in the 'Quartet,' or the lines of the couch in 'Yellow Marguerites.' These lines were "broken" or crossed by the more supple lines of the draped figures, which, in a certain sense, only existed to perform this office in the composition. Of course, there were all sorts of subtleties as well, like the placing of some bit of detail to obviate the sharpness of some angle, but this matter of the horizontal lines was the underlying principle in his compositions. No doubt he got this idea from Greek bas-reliefs, and, in a certain sense, his pictures were bas-reliefs.

Albert Moore never became a member of the Royal Academy. It is possible that he would not have cared to belong to it; but, as a matter of fact, he was never asked. This is the more curious in that his brother was one of the Academicians. It is not to the credit of the Academy that they should have ignored one of the most original and stimulating of modern British artists; and yet one, in a way, understands their attitude. They found it hard to forgive the entire lack of literary *raison d'etre* in his pictures. He would paint a single figure of a young girl doing nothing save to exist and be beautiful. They wanted to know what she was thinking of, what her past status had been before the painting of the picture, and whether there was reason to suppose her conduct in the future would approximate to that of the past. Indeed, if Moore had no other distinguishing quality, if he had lacked all his qualities of Invention, Decorative Arrangement, Line, Color, Form, he would still have this distinction: that in his day and generation he was practically the only Englishman who made pictures which were not tainted with sentimentalism.

Moore had a very definite and rather complicated method of painting which is described and explained at great length by Mr. Lys Baldry in his life of the artist. Some parts of this method seem admirable; others are at least ingenious. Its basis was excessive care in getting the line and form just right, and, these things arranged, equal care was to be observed that the *facture* of the painting should be fresh and unteased, to the end that the work, though really care-

fully studied, should have an air of spontaneity. It is a way which might not suit the temperament of every artist. Yet in Moore's hands it certainly produced good results. And nowadays, when so much work is done too carelessly, too much in the spirit of a sketch, one cannot but admire the severe discipline of his method.

One would hardly call Albert Moore a realist, in the sense of selecting workaday subjects or treating them in an unimaginative way. And yet, his subject once chosen and his arrangement made, Moore, like all great artists, treated the actual form of his picture in a very objective way. He was careful to have the *mise en scène*, the lines, the draperies, the figures, the types, in his pictures as beautiful as possible. These chosen and arranged, he made them as "like" as he could.

Mr. Alfred Lys Baldry has a great deal to say about Albert Moore's color, and in one sense he was, indeed, a colorist; that is, he thought a great deal about color. His pictures were always efforts to present handsome color arrangements. At the same time, they cannot always be called successful in this respect. Sometimes, as in 'Pomegranates,' the color combination will be at the same time daring, yet well chosen. At other times, the mere list of the leading colors in the combination is enough to set one's teeth on edge.

Of "values," in the sense that they exist in Velasquez's 'Meninas,' there is little enough in Moore's work; for he was not preoccupied in problems of atmosphere, of chiaroscuro, or the subtle tightening and loosening of lines that make for focus. But in the sense of a handsome design, of light and dark masses — what the Japanese call *notan* — in this sense his values were admirable. All his best pictures make this handsome "spotting," so that with a burnt match dipped in ink one could copy the dark masses against the lights on a scrap of paper the size of a postage-stamp and still have a handsome design. Moore was almost infallible in this, and it may be said that all the really great pictures of the world are successful in this same handsome balancing of dark masses against light; and this includes the proper observance of how large the light masses shall be in relation to the dark.

His color, as has just been hinted, was based on the same idea. He would have one strong note running in different shades and hues through the whole thing. In this he was not unlike Whistler; but, unlike Whistler, he would introduce the strongest oppositions of color, which looked all the more marked on account of the lack of chiaroscuro in his work. Perhaps it may be said that though he loved color intensely, his color is the least successful part of his work. It was the most English thing about his work. Although the hues were usually most beautiful in themselves, they sometimes "swore" at each other, to use the studio phrase, and in a measure destroyed the *ensemble*, which he knew so well to make, of lines and tones. This is not to say that he was always unsuccessful in this regard. In some of his pictures, as in the 'Summer Night' (Plate I) and the 'Pomegranates' (Plate VI), he was most successful; in others, hardly so much.

But, on the other hand, as a designer he was very wonderful. Not only is the design in his pictures always interesting and, at times, singularly beauti-

ful and original as well, but in all sorts of allied arts he made designs of fine quality. One might say that his design was based on the Greek with some hint of the Japanese, especially in his later things. It was based — this design, and his color as well — on opposition. He placed certain definite immovable verticals and horizontals and then "broke" them with lovely oppositions of drapery and form in all sorts of alluring attitudes and shapes. When one has got the key to his scheme of things it is interesting to see how easily it turns the lock of his secret. The 'Quartet,' the 'Summer Night,' and the 'Yellow Marguerites,' to speak of three of his loveliest imaginings, all are based on the principles just spoken of.

As to his drawing, it was good enough, though one would hardly call him a great modern draftsman in the sense that one does Ingres or Delaunay. Yet this drawing of his sufficed all his needs. It allowed him to place everything supremely well, to design his shapes handsomely. One never feels that his drawing is incorrect. If one said the worst of it, it would be to hint that it was sometimes a trifle wooden. He had not what William Blake called the bounding line, that vital, intense, springy line that marks the great draftsman.

What one feels most strongly in Moore's works is their decorative intention; not only in the general scheme of composition, always based on the bas-relief idea, but in every detail, the decorative intent is manifest. One might say that a good decoration should have this quality — that every inch of it should be "amusing," should interest and delight the eye. Where a dramatic, a story-telling, or a realistic picture should have one point of interest, a focusing-point, to which the eye is irresistibly drawn even at the expense of the minor details, a good decoration, while it has its important lines and masses, still permits the eye to wander complacently all over the decorated space, finding pleasure in this hanging, in that rug, without undue interest in any particular thing. That, indeed, is the essence of decoration — that it should decorate. And in Moore's work one always feels this preoccupation, that every inch of the space covered shall be made "amusing" and delightful to the eye. In his latter work it may be that this intention was pushed almost too far. The design on the rugs and on the wall is brought out so firmly as to give the thing almost the look of a mosaic; but this was Moore's quality, which, once in a long time, became almost a defect.

In technique, Moore, especially in his early days, was far ahead of his time, for England at least. At the time he painted his 'Pomegranates' one might say that there was no man in England who could match him for crisp, fragrant laying-on of paint. At a time when almost every one but the pre-Raphaelites was painting in a messy, sloppy way, Moore's technique was crisp and clean; and where the pre-Raphaelites were rather hard and dry and tight, Moore's *matière* was always fluent and agreeable in surface. Toward the end of his life it may be that his painting became a little *meticuleux*. His care of every detail of drapery was so great that he sometimes did not properly observe the *ensemble*. Still, as English painters go, he might be called a master of technique.

It is a curious instance of how subtle a thing is originality that Moore,

whose art was all based on the Classic and the Japanese, should yet have done most original work. It is his point of view which makes it original. His young men and maidens wear Greek draperies, they flirt a Japanese fan or play upon a violoncello of Renaissance design; but they are modern all the same, and it is a modern sense of beauty, a something quite different from the æsthetic feeling of old times, which informs this work with a peculiar originality. He has picked Greek asphodel, Japanese camellias, violets from Florence, but has bound them into a nosegay which is new, fresh, which has a delicate composite fragrance that suggests the old, yet is different.

# The Art of Moore

ALFRED LYS BALDRY 'ALBERT MOORE'

THE first stage of one of his pictures was a mere thumb-nail note, often in pen and ink on some odd scrap of paper; but this was repeated again and again until the main facts of the subject that he had in his mind were settled. The next point was to devise a system of line-arrangement, congruous with the leading lines of the sketch, and convenient for the placing of accessories as well as for the composition of the figures and draperies. By the aid of this he was able to settle the distribution of his color-surfaces as well, to plan exactly the spots and masses which played such important parts in the carrying out of the combinations he had selected. He could judge, too, how large to make each patch of a particular tint, and could fix the proper relation between color area and degree of brilliancy, necessary for maintaining due balance and support throughout the canvas.

When these preliminaries were settled he began a series of careful drawings of the figures, nude studies in black and white chalk on brown paper. These were generally of only moderate dimensions about a foot high, as he held it easier to draw correctly and expressively on a scale that was not too large. This size was the one that seemed to him to be most workable; one that would admit of the drawing being judged as a whole at a distance of an arm's length. His object in these studies was to secure exactly the pose of his model, to keep the actual proportions and character of the figure that he might be working from, and to make a faithful representation of the type of nature that was before him. Any attempt to modify or improve upon the visible characteristics of the model in such sketches as these he entirely condemned; for he argued that without the solid basis of fact, the actual vivid representation of life even with all blemishes and imperfections, there could be no efficient correction. He reserved for another stage the amendments that his knowledge of what was best in both nature and art taught him to be necessary.

The preparation of the black-and-white cartoon was the next matter. For this he enlarged his nude studies to the sizes that he intended the figures to

be in the picture, and made whatever changes in proportions or features its scheme or the deficiencies of the model made necessary. He settled the places and relation of the groups, and their positions with regard to the boundaries of the composition. A pricking was then made, the lines of the cartoon were transferred to the canvas by a pounce of charcoal-dust, and these faint outlines were filled in with a rapid sketch of the whole subject in pretty full color.

Then he set to work on the drapery studies, leaving the picture itself a while untouched. He transferred to a number of separate canvases the figures from his cartoon, drawing them in outline with thin color over the dots made by pounce. In his earlier years his habit was to make, during the short time, an hour or so, that he could depend upon his model remaining in the pose required, a couple of rapid studies. When the casting of the draperies, a matter to which he devoted an immense amount of attention, seemed to him to be satisfactory, and to give him the lines and composition he wished, he made in all haste, but with extreme care, a black-and-white drawing of it — often on tracing-paper pasted over his original life sketch — giving to this drawing rather more than half the time available. During the rest of the sitting he painted on one of the canvases which he had prepared with an outline of the figure an even more rapid colored study, stating precisely the matters of color transition and variation that it was important for him to know thoroughly for the proper working-out of the details subsequently. With these two versions of the drapery to refer to, he had all necessary information, and knew exactly how to treat the same arrangement of lines when it came to be painted in the main picture. Latterly, however, he changed his methods of work to some extent, substituting a photograph of the draperies for his chalk drawing, and giving practically the whole sitting to a thorough, and often highly finished, oil-study. It was in this way that he came to have by him so many works which were apparently only slightly modified copies of one another. When he painted a study of more than average completeness he very often developed it into a picture for the Academy or the Grosvenor, by the addition of a head, hands, and feet, and by designing a suitable background and appropriate accessories. This is the history of the origin of many of his smaller productions like 'Jasmine,' or 'Rose-leaves,' and even of some of his more important canvases, as, for instance, 'A Revery.'

It is worthy noting here that when, as he occasionally did, he repeated a picture this repetition became, not a mere copy, but a distinct version, different in color-scheme and often considerably altered in details of treatment. Each separate work, though composed on the same lines and with identical accessories, was studied from nature and painted with whatever inevitable variations might be presented. This may be well seen by a comparison of the two seeming duplicates, 'Beads' and 'A Sofa.' In both of these he used the same figure cartoon and followed the same main lines of drapery arrangement; but he went direct to nature in each case, and the differences that can be found between them are those that he saw. He refused to secure exact repetition at the expense of faithful study of what was before him, and gave to the replica as much labor as he had already devoted to the original.

While the drapery studies were being made he generally advanced the picture itself another stage or two. The first thing was to lay fairly thick over the color-sketch a priming of white lead; and as soon as this had hardened, to transfer to the fresh surface the nude cartoon. He painted the figures with a good deal of minuteness, going into a considerable amount of detail, and then covered them with another priming of white lead. The object of these successive primings was to give the picture a sufficient backing of white to secure it from all risk of darkening or of losing its brilliancy of color; and to provide also a ground which would be pleasant to work upon, and on which the brushmarks would have a better effect than the harsh thread-lines of the thinly primed canvas. Each coat of white lead had also the effect of reproducing the original surface of the canvas, and of softening down any coarseness or inequality of texture caused by brushwork of the intermediate paintings, and yet was never solid enough to entirely obliterate the work beneath. There remained always sufficient trace of each stage to make the carrying out of the next one easier and more certain.

By the time the second priming had dried, the drapery cartoon was ready. This was the outcome of the studies already drawn and painted, and in it were still the exact placing of the folds, the relations of the various masses one to the other, and the conformity with the general composition of the picture. When this second cartoon had, in its turn, been transferred to the canvas, he usually dwelt at some length upon the preparations for the final stage of his work. Before he began to deal with the color he carried the whole design as far as possible in monochrome, using a very gentle tone of silver gray. He had by now settled what were to be the accessories and minor details of his picture, and had decided upon all the smaller incidents and subtleties with which the main motive was to be varied, so that there was comparatively little difficulty in making this gray drawing very nearly complete.

There was, however, yet another preliminary to be gone through before the actual completion could be considered to be within measurable distance — the painting on tracing-paper, pinned over the gray sketch on the canvas, of a color-cartoon in which the whole color-effect of the finished picture was anticipated. This painted tracing served a double purpose: it gave an opportunity of testing any doubtful points that might yet remain in the color-scheme; and it enabled him to overcome one of the chief troubles of direct painting — the difficulty of giving their right effect to patches of color upon a canvas as yet covered only with neutral tints. By fastening the tracing over his picture and cutting it away bit by bit as he worked, he was able to keep the surface upon which he was actually engaged surrounded always with color of the same force and brilliancy as he was applying to the canvas. By the help of such a device there was security against the chance of having to retouch those parts of his picture which he first handled, because when its whole area was covered they looked weak and out of keeping with the rest and there was no longer any danger of his diminishing the effectiveness of his color-harmony by having to bring the whole of the work down to the level of

certain unduly dull tones which seemed, when isolated, to be more brilliant than they really were. The fact that some of the tracings have survived proves that he also found them useful, now and then, as aids to the final choice of his color-scheme. Those that were not cut up were first ideas that he had seen fit to modify, experiments really that he had not adopted. The sketch called 'Lovers' is one of these, an arrangement of orange, rose-color, white, and green, which was apparently too complicated, seeing that the 'Idyll,' his Academy picture of 1893, for which it was designed, was actually carried out in a similar harmony of yellow, green, and white. His method of handling the color in the last stage of his picture was straightforward enough. His chief object was always to do as much as possible at one painting, and to avoid the necessity of going twice over the same space. If any preparatory work was necessary before the actual finishing-touches could be applied he kept it for simple matters of large modeling, and avoided small details. He feared to lose the effect of freshness and spontaneity by any suggestion of labor, and aimed at making his picture look like a happily contrived and expressive sketch. Every possible device was used to prevent hesitation or uncertainty in the actual painting. Even the colors were, as far as was practicable, mixed beforehand, and sufficient of each put into tubes ready for use. His custom was to mix the color of the highest light, his warmest shadow, of the coldest shadow, in the drapery or other subject he was going to represent, and to set his palette with these, using the ordinary color-box pigments only for modifications and variations of the prevailing color. He began by drawing with his high-light color upon the gray sketch, or, if he had already covered that with any preparatory work, upon a transparent gray tone rubbed over the underpainting, the forms of the lights, stating them carefully in full color and making them exactly right in shape; over this, while it was still wet, he carried a very thin and fluid scrub of color, matching, as nearly as possible, the prevailing high tone. The effect of this seemingly messy process was to give him a very delicate gradated and subtly varied representation of the subject, lacking only the darker shadows and the highest lights to be complete. Speed was, of course, necessary in this method of work, and, as with the wet plaster in fresco-painting, whatever of the high-light drawing or color-tone that could not be finished at once had to be removed. To have completed it next day would have been impossible.

The principle of it all was not unlike that of water-color painting, much of the comfort and convenience of the method depending upon the possibility of working always on a damp surface. This analogy was still further strengthened by the extreme thinness of the color which he habitually used, and by the liquidity of the medium with which he diluted his pigments — petroleum mixed with a small quantity of oil. The advantage of these thick primings and closely covered underpaintings becomes very evident when the delicacy of the later stages is considered. With the solid backing of white lead, with all the main facts of his subjects clearly expressed from the first beginnings, he knew that no change that time would bring was likely to affect the stability

or permanence of his work. Age, which has a tendency to make transparent the thickest mass of pigment, could only strengthen it and give it increased luminosity; and if anything ever came through, as an underpainting at times is apt to do, it would but reinforce the surface details. Moreover, the thin final touches could be applied with all certainty and with no fear of their appearing empty and slight upon the solid basis prepared for them with so much ingenuity and foresight.

A very similar preparation was made for his rapid sketches and studies. These were almost invariably painted on a canvas covered with at least two coatings of white lead, and toned with transparent color to a delicate gray. He had always available a stock of these prepared canvases upon which to note anything of which he desired to have a record. His method was the same as in the final painting of his pictures, and his effects were arrived at by the same sequence of high-light sketching, color-toning, and shadow and high-light painting. Of course he had for his sketches no underpainting nor any previous placing of details. He had only the roughly drawn outline of the nude figure to guide him; yet by a deliberately contrived device, by a careful crossing of the brushmarks, he provided himself with a ground upon which even the thinnest scrub of color had the look of being elaborately painted. In this way he was able to secure the effect, even in slight sketches, of many paintings, and of thickly applied pigments. He was able, in a word, to work in the manner that was to us most pleasant, with thin, fluid colors, and yet to give to his productions the mechanical advantages and the appearance of solidity.

HAROLD FREDERIC 'SCRIBNER' [1891]

HE is frankly an idealist. He held that the ideal form of things is the ascertained best form of nature, the tradition of which has been handed down by little groups of devoted men from the time when the artist came into closest touch with what was finest and most beautiful in form. Even in that golden age the Greek masters had traditional ideals which transcended the wonderful nature they knew. The central group of the Parthenon frieze shows gods and goddesses dressed differently from the procession of people who wear the costume of the period. The dreams of Phidias were loftier and better than the best that even his informed eye could see in the chosen models of Athens.

Art has touched no other mark so high as that of Greece, even in the best days of the Renaissance. Mr. Moore will explain this upon the ground that when art reappeared in Europe, after the crash and darkened desolation of the barbaric conquests, it emerged as the slave of the Church and kingcraft, and was set to the task of depicting stories for unlettered generations. For ages its work was to paint scriptural scenes for the churches and abbeys, and portraits and processions for the palaces. The Old Masters carried their art — wonderful as it was in its highest expressions, and inspiring as it must be for all time — to its acme of effectiveness in the days preceding the diffusion

of printed books, and when the painter was still essentially a teller of stories. When men began to read their stories, instead, painting sank to lower levels wherever it was not emancipated from the story-telling theory.

The modern revival has been vastly hampered and retarded — in England more than elsewhere — by the perpetuation of the old, popular theory that art must of necessity deal with stories. Every artist remembers drawing an ideal head in his school-days, and being asked by all the non-artistic boys, "Who is that meant for?" The commonplace mind instinctively seeks to identify pictures with things familiar to it. The great painters, in the days when there was no printing-press rival, could afford to bully or ignore this instinct, and forced the wondering and untutored masses, for sheer need of a story of some sort, to stare at their work and marvel over it, and so to, in some vague little measure, follow after them in their upward flight. But to-day the academic painter may not venture upon any flight at all. In pursuit of his hereditary misconception of his art as purely that of the narrator, he must tell a story which the commonplace mind will easily lay hold of and like. That means painting down, instead of up. It means the lowering of both artist and public. It means the Royal Academy.

There are, of course, a certain number of painters in the Academy who are artists as well, with a high sense of beauty and an honest shame in the necessity of the narrative pot-boiler; and their President is even a poet, who dares much in his efforts to escape the burden of Philistinism. But the weight of the Academy as a whole presses so heavily upon the other side that these enlightened few are powerless to shape either its precepts or its example, and their diminishing group is under no circumstances recruited from without.

The revolts in England against this orthodoxy of story-telling mediocrity have been many, but their history contains the record of few successes, and is not very comforting reading. It is not much to be able to say that Whistler is the foremost painter in England, if people will not buy his pictures, and if the young men who profess to follow him think more of being unlike the Academy than of being like their master. The revolts have been more fertile in astonishing extravagances than in substantial and hopeful work. Too often, where genius has been planted, only bald eccentricity has come up.

Albert Moore has made no revolt, because he has never owned allegiance, and because he has luckily commanded from the outset a success sufficient for independence. When he first began to look at things Britain was wrapped as with a mantle in ugliness. The sense of beauty in form had been dead for years. The horrors of the Georgian architecture had been succeeded by the despair of frantic imitations of the worst that other people could do, as witness the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly. Women wore crinolines, and men cased their legs in peg-tops. People sat on black horse-hair furniture, and the Pavilion at Brighton was supposed to be a vision of artistic perfection. It was a great deal that young Moore, in this barren environment, should have dreamed a dream of what beauty was. It is vastly more that, having wakened to a mastery of his powers, he should have toiled unweariedly, steadfastly, turning neither to the right nor to the left, after the realization of this dream.

Although one of the most facile and skilled of draftsmen, Moore has painted only two portraits in his life, and has resisted with equal firmness every attempt to induce him to draw for publication. All the labor of his life has been scrupulously devoted to his paintings, and to the mass of charcoal studies, pastel cartoons, and painstaking drawings of minute details which led the way to these finished works. No painter was ever a severer self-critic. Oftentimes the drapery of a single figure — that strangely beautiful drapery in which he perpetuates the flowing lines of the Greek ideal, and which he obtains from robes of Chinese silk, never touching a fold with his hands, but having the model move again and again till he catches the desired effect — represents the toil of months. As has been said before, his pictures are sold on the easel, while they are still unfinished. The purchaser has time to saturate himself with the joys of anticipation before the painter will consent to release his work. He hangs over it in loving anxiety, perfecting this detail, altering another, bringing everything to the highest imaginable point of completion.

Albert Moore enters upon the plan of a picture almost, one might say, in a spirit of consecration. It is always to be his best. He dreams over it, devises it through the laborious ordeal of many cartoons, makes exhaustive sketches of all its component parts. To skilful use of selected models the figures in his pictures are obviously indebted, for they palpitate with that life which lay-figure never yet gave. But the faces are those of women Moore never saw — the low-browed, broad-templed, sweetly gentle and tenderly grave faces that the nameless sculptor knew and loved and handed down to us through the Aphrodite found at Milo.

# The Works of Moore

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

'SUMMER NIGHT' PLATE I

THERE is no more lovely composition by Moore than this. It would seem as if he had taken the most beautiful motives — moonlight, a summer night, beautiful women, flowers — and bound them together in one bouquet of color and form. The composition, though like all of Moore's it is based on simple lines, becomes rather intricate, particularly in the festoons of flowers above. Here the long lines of the divan form a base against which the graceful forms of the women reveal themselves in handsome lines and masses. It would be false criticism to pretend that one was almost aware of the vague odor of night-flowers outside; that one almost heard the vague sounds of night. Yet so skilfully are the lines, the tones, the colors, arranged that one does get the sense of a mood, of a certain particular moment and mood of life different from others. Here one has the sense of moonlight outside, and is aware of the long lines of the summer sea. To express a definite

artistic mood free from sentimentalism or literary intention is a difficult thing, and this is what Moore has accomplished. The divan and carpet are ornamented with all the richness of Moore's later work. Note the skill with which vases, flowers, or leaves are introduced to break certain lines which might otherwise be too long in their straightness.

Baldry says: "In color it is mainly an arrangement in flesh-color, yellow, and gray, the yellow running through the paler primrose and buttercup shades up to a definite orange, and the grays ranging from black to the palest silver. The flesh-tones are warm and full, creamy rather than silvery, and are juxtaposed with the pale primrose yellow of the draperies wrapped round the legs of the seated figures and thrown over the cushions upon which the center girl reclines. The brocade of which the covering and valances of the seats are made is of a strong buttercup yellow with orange patterns, and the flowers festooned above are yellow pansies. The lights of the town beyond the lagoon are strong orange red, and, small as they are, serve a valuable purpose in the ordering of the color."

### 'BLOSSOMS' PLATE II

NOWHERE has Moore — a master in the treatment of draperies — painted the flow of fold over form more beautifully than here. The folds reveal the main lines of the figure, yet the whole thing is of a chastity characteristic of the best Greek art. Note how the folds all center and converge on one point, where the two hands are brought up to the neck. The face is very characteristic of Moore. Beautiful, yet of no great subtlety; Greek in its regularity, yet really above all things English. The blossoms, cunningly disposed, decorate the background admirably, while the straight white line of what looks like a couch cuts the line of the drapery and makes an opposition to the upright lines of the frame.

Mr. Baldry says: "The long, large folds of her pale rose-colored robe fall in simple lines. . . . She wears a black head-dress. Behind her is a dark, ashy-gray wall, half hidden by a lace-like network of white cherry-blossoms, which makes, as it were, a screen of flowers; and a low seat covered with white drapery stands on the black-and-gray floor. At her feet is a red rug and above her head are two small crimson curtains which fill the upper corners of the panel."

### 'SEA GULLS' AND 'SHELLS' PLATE III

MOORE painted these two pictures at about the same time, and in a sense they are companion pieces, though not really painted to hang together. Although these pictures are out-of-door compositions, the straight lines of the sea and shore serve much the same purpose as horizontal lines of bas-reliefs. Nowhere, perhaps, has Moore been more happy in catching the movement of a lovely figure half revealed by flowing draperies than in these pictures. The toss and movement of drapery blown by the wind serves its

end in the novel design of the contours and the revelation of the forms of the figure.

Lys Baldry says of 'Sea Gulls': "It represents a large-limbed, classically proportioned maiden walking on a beach. She wears a robe of transparent black, which is half concealed by an ample drapery, thin in texture, and in color a pale greenish gray. On her fair hair there is a black cap, in which is placed a bright red flower, a color-accent repeated in the rosy shells at her feet. The beach is warm gray, and is strewn with white rocks, half covered with dark seaweed. Sea and sky are both treated in tones of gray, and two gray sea-gulls are introduced at the top of the picture."

'A MUSICIAN' PLATE IV

THE principles of composition which have been before hinted at are brought out very strongly in this picture. A very marked Grecian design (probably invented by Moore himself) is brought in straight lines across the canvas. Then the two girls are so disposed that their heads hide part of the horizontal line and prevent its making too straight a path across the whole canvas. Note also the effort (in this case not wholly successful) at repeated line and rhythm in the movement of the several left hands of the girls. The head of the musician breaks the line of the bas-relief in the same sense as do the two girls, and the general lines of his figure are placed as an opposition to the long lines of the girls' draperies. An unexpected note is the way that Japanese fans are introduced along the dado.

We are told by Baldry: "The musician, a dark youth in a thin yellow tunic, is seated bending forward over his lyre, while opposite to him the girls, fair-headed, and in yellow, rose-color, and white draperies, recline on a low seat before a white-paneled wall. Above the paneling is a gray frieze, and the floor is pale red; on the right of the picture is introduced a purple iris in a glass vase, and on the left a pink azalea in a pot."

'A WARDROBE' PLATE V

A. LYS BALDRY says of this picture: "In color 'A Wardrobe' is extremely gentle. The pale creamy skin of the youthful but well-developed figure is accentuated by the masses of transparent white drapery falling in ample folds behind it. The background is a wall of darker flesh-color, while the upper part of the picture is filled with a quaintly designed cupboard painted in simple patterns, and which by its definite lines gives strength and power to the composition of the picture. On the woman's head is a pale blue cap, and her left hand holds a string of blue beads. Her feet are set upon a leopard-skin. The key in which the whole is pitched is markedly high and brilliant, and no attempt has been made to gain effectiveness by exaggeration of shadows. Nevertheless, the rounding of the limbs and torso is complete and expressive, and the pervading refinement of the whole design never approaches indefiniteness or degenerates into flatness."

It is one of the hardest things for a modern to invent a new gesture which

shall be at the same time graceful yet significant and logical. Especially is this true in the treatment of the nude. One finds almost exactly the same pose as Ingres 'La Source' in one of Jean Goujon's fountain bas-reliefs. And various of Sir Frederic Leighton's poses are to be found in classic sculpture. Apparently Moore has succeeded in finding something new. One does not recall any old design like this. The graceful figure of the girl makes a pleasant relief to the straight horizontal lines of the background, and the draperies, in varying folds, not only afford verticals to give contrast to the horizontals before mentioned, but also curved lines to modify the verticals. The decoration of the wardrobe, though in a sense very simple, is yet surprisingly ingenious. Note the circular lines in the upper left-hand corner of the left door, which are introduced to give variety to the upright lines. A whole sermon on ornament is here. The manner in which the other door is left somewhat ajar is very well thought out. The lighter tone of the wall beyond brings out the shadow and, therefore, the design of the head. The dark spots on the leopard-skin at the girl's feet make a *rappel*, or reminder, of the darker notes of the wardrobe above.

'POMEGRANATES' PLATE VI

THIS is, perhaps, the handsomest composition that Moore ever made. It has all the science of his other ones, with a little more of the unexpected. While these others are rather formal in their arrangement, this one has more of haphazard, of the unforeseen. And yet, when one comes to analyze this composition, it is composed in a very knowing way. The straight lines are not this time carried to the end of the canvas, yet there is enough of them to make their breaking by the kneeling girls very grateful to the eye. The draperies of the figures, although not so elaborate as later work, are beautifully made, and the pattern on the little chest is excellently well done; also, the leaves in the left corner are admirably made.

Baldry says of this: "A group of three girls in transparent white robes partly covered with other semi-transparent draperies of different shades of red. The central figure of the group is kneeling before the open door of a cabinet, on the top of which the others lean right and left, and interest themselves in the action of their companion. The cabinet is white, painted with formally treated ornamentation in orange and red; the wall behind is white, and a blue mat and some green leaves hang on it; the floor is dark gray-blue with white patterns; and in front of the cabinet is a leopard-skin, upon which stands a two-handled black jar. The picture is named from a bowl of pomegranates and other fruit placed on top of the cabinet."

'MIDSUMMER' PLATE VII

THIS picture is thus described by Mr. Baldry: "The three figures depicted on it are not far off life size, and are draped, over thin underdresses of white gauze, in the strongest orange. The center girl sits half asleep on a silver throne festooned with long wreaths of golden yellow flowers, and

the whole group is set before a wall of black marble paneling with a carved base of green marble. The two fair-haired attendants standing right and left of the throne hold apple-green fans, and green, with black and shades of yellow, is freely used in the foreground carpet, which lies upon a creamy yellow floor. At the back are a cabinet, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and a yellow vase with leaves and flowers. The effect produced by the intensity of the colors used, and by the largeness of the spaces they fill, is unexpectedly insistent, if not aggressive; and in the hands of an artist of less technical knowledge, and with less sense of right arrangement, the picture might easily have become garish and crude. As it is, however, it deserves to be quoted as an example of the manner in which strength of color can be obtained without loss of either brilliancy or refinement."

Apart from the handsome arrangement, there is in this a happy sense of the pleasant weariness of midsummer. This weary queen, like that other one a long time dead, these graceful queans on either side, are oppressed by the healthful laziness of a summer day, and every movement helps to give this impression. To express a mood — that was one of Moore's aims, and certainly in this picture he has achieved it.

'YELLOW MARGUERITES' PLATE VIII

YET again Mr. Baldry says: "The stately maiden who is the subject of the picture is not asleep, but, with head raised and supported by a black silk cushion set against the wall behind, is gazing in a contemplative fashion straight before her. Her drapery is pale creamy yellow, and over her knees hang, festooned, rippling folds of white gauze. On her head is a rose-red cap and about her neck is a row of white beads. The upper part of the background wall is green, but the lower half is covered with a dado of white lace. Couch and floor are green; on the right is a pale yellow fan with pink edge, and on the left a glass jar filled with yellow marguerites. A black butterfly on the wall breaks the green expanse of the background, and a black, pink, and yellow rug covers the floor."

'Yellow Marguerites' is one of the most typical of Albert Moore's pictures, not merely in its arrangement, which is quite on the lines of his ideas of composition, but also in its curious *melange* of Grecian draperies, Japanese fan, and marguerites, which one guesses to be a modern development of some simpler form of flower. To him a picture existed first for its perfection of line, form, and color. His girl is beautiful, not because he desires to please a public fond of pretty girls, but because nothing unlovely must come into his picture. One believes anything else would have served him as well, were it not that he could find nothing quite so handsome as a young girl draped in classic fold.

What one notes about the composition is the way the splendid opulent figure and draperies are flung diagonally across the precise horizontal forms of the background. In order that the diagonal may not be too strong and noticeable, the fan is introduced in such a way that its ribs run counter to the

general direction of the draperies. Also certain draperies, as the scarf across the knee, serve something the same purpose.

An interesting detail, happy or otherwise, is the way in which a broad band of lace is stretched across the background. It is not just where one would expect to find lace, but Moore liked the looks of lace and that was enough. The yellow marguerites are skilfully placed so as to break the line of drapery which otherwise might be monotonous in its curve, and the beautifully rendered glass vase serves well to fill a corner.

'BATTLEDORE' AND 'SHUTTLECOCK' PLATE IX

OF these pictures, Mr. Baldry says: "Of the two, 'Battledore,' with its quieter gradation of blues, is preferable to the green-and-blue 'Shuttlecock.' In the former picture the thin blue-and-gray drapery of the girl, who stands holding a battledore in one hand and shuttlecock in the other, is set against a background of blue wall, and hangings of gray figured with blue. On her head is a blue cap with a rosette of black and orange, and at her feet is a mat striped blue, black, orange, and gray. Behind her is a blue-green pot with flowers. In 'Shuttlecock' the arrangement is similar, but green takes the place of blue and blue of gray, and there are a few more touches of contrasting color."

It is the gesture which particularly charms one in the picture 'Shuttlecock.' Gesture, indeed, is one of Albert Moore's special characteristics. So many figures one sees are pleasantly posed, make a pretty line, and yet there is nothing unique about them. Now the masters of gesture — Moore was one of them, Ingres was another — will spend hours, even days, in finding the one best movement that is beautiful in itself, makes a wholly new form for the eye, and quite expresses the individual character of the model. It is said that Moore had beautiful girls clad in Greek draperies to play at battledore and shuttlecock by the hour till the one and only movement was caught.

These two pictures are, among other reasons, interesting because Moore has in them, to some extent, departed from his usual scheme of composition, and that in a rather subtle way. That is, instead of, as usual, placing his gracefully flowing draperies against rigid horizontals and verticals, he has opposed swirls of background drapery in such a way that their folds come nearly at right angles to the folds of his girls' Greek garments. True, there are horizontals at the top and bottom, but not placed in such a manner as to cross the main draperies of the figures. One subtle quality in these figures is the graceful *gaucherie* of women playing an unaccustomed game. The movements are a little constrained, almost awkward, and yet have about them the charm that a beautiful woman puts into every gesture.

'A GARDEN' PLATE X

MR. BALDRY says of this: "'A Garden' shows a pleasant arrangement of pale green draperies over white, with an accent of orange in the cap that partly covers the fair hair of the maiden whose graceful movement to

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pluck a flower is the sole incidental motive of the picture. The background is a gray wall, and the accessories form a kind of pattern of leaves and flowers, nasturtiums, anemones, and asters, in shades of purple, blue, and orange. The effect of the whole is peculiarly tender and refined, with a reticence that is much more convincing than demonstrativeness can ever be."

The main line in the composition is a diagonal running from the upraised hand downward toward the right. This line is repeated by the lower hand outstretched toward the flowers. As a corrective to this diagonal, the shrub in the foreground is introduced, its main lines running somewhat in an inverse sense. Also the tip of the head and the line of the sapling which she holds give an opposition to the strong main diagonal of the picture. The upright flower-stems, which in themselves might appear stiff, form a good background in opposition to the flowing lines of drapery. This law of contrasts is one of the most important in Decorative Art.

While this picture has not a little claim, it is also interesting to study as being one of Moore's first in this *genre*. And while the draperies are well enough made, they are not arranged and studied with the skill which Moore later displayed. The picture is, however, a typical Moore, its aim being the handsome rendering of well-balanced design, beautiful lines, and lovely color. Note the signature in the lower left-hand corner, not unlike the kind of thing which Whistler was doing at the same time.

### A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS BY ALBERT MOORE

LORD ARMSTRONG: Follow My Leader — BIRMINGHAM CORPORATION: Dreamers — J. CHAMBERLAIN: Sapphires; Birds — W. COLTART: The Quartette; A Wardrobe (Plate v) — W. CONNAL, JR.: Rose-leaves; Reading Aloud; An Idyll; Midsummer (Plate vii) — LORD DAVEY: Waiting to Cross — E. DENNY: Sea Gulls (Plate iii); Shells (Plate iii) — L. T. DEVITT: Companions — W. FOTHERGILL: Jasmine — F. H. GOSSAGE: Acacias — G J. GRIBBLE: A Palm Fan — A. HENDERSON: A Garden (Plate x) — C. JOSEPH: Red Berries — W. KENRICH: The End of the Story — J. LEATHART: A Musician (Plate iv); Battledore (Plate ix); Shuttlecock (Plate ix) — C. E. LEES: A Yellow Room — LIVERPOOL CORPORATION: A Summer Night (Plate i) — A. MAXWELL: Beads — H. MOORE: A Sofa — W. G. ROBERTSON: The Toilet — H. TATE: Blossoms (Plate ii) — H. TRIST: Pomegranates (Plate vi).

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## LIST OF PLATES

THE SISTINE MADONNA . . . . . RAPHAEL
*Royal Gallery, Dresden*

MADONNA OF THE CHAIR . . . . . RAPHAEL
*Pitti Palace, Florence*

MADONNA OF THE HOUSE OF ALBA . RAPHAEL
*The Hermitage, St. Petersbury*

VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS . . LEONARDO DA VINCI
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